

RWE Renewables UK Dogger Bank South (West) Limited RWE Renewables UK Dogger Bank South (East) Limited

Dogger Bank South Offshore Wind Farms

Environmental Statement

Volume 7

Appendix 18-5 Bats Report - Ground Level Tree

Assessment (Revision 2)

January 2025

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Unrestricted



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Rev No.	Date	Status/Reason for Issue	Author	Checked by	Approved by
01	June 2024	Final for DCO Application	Peak Ecology	RWE	RWE
02	January 2025	Submission in response to the ExA Rule 4, 6, 9, 13 and 17 Letter [PD-010]	Peak Ecology	RWE	RWE

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Revision	Change Lo	g	
Rev No.	Page	Section	Description
01	N/A	N/A	Final for DCO Submission
02	N/A	Appendix B	Appendix B: GLTA Survey Map has been updated at the request of the ExA in the Rule 4, 6, 9, 13 and 17 Letter [PD-010] to show the trees of roost potential as referenced in the ES Chapter 18 (Revision 4).





Ground Level Tree Assessment 2023

Dogger Bank South (DBS) Offshore Wind Farms

Project No: HASK08.2 Client: Royal HaskoningDHV Date: 25/03/2024

ISSUE RECORD

Client name Royal HaskoningDHV

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The information and advice contained in this report has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's Code of Professional Conduct. We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions.

Peak Ecology is accredited under ISO9001 and as such this report follows the styles and formatting template set out within our Quality Management Form.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This data report has been prepared by Peak Ecology Ltd with Royal HaskoningDHV on behalf of RWE Renewables UK. It provides the results of a Ground Level Tree Assessment was undertaken of trees within the Onshore Development Area, associated with the Dogger Bank South (DBS) Offshore Wind Farms.

The majority of survey work was completed in February and March; all survey work was completed by September 2023.

The desk study included 18 bat records within 1km of the Onshore Development Area, this included four bat roosts. One bat record, a common pipistrelle, was within the Onshore Development Area; the four bat roosts were all outside of the Onshore Development Area. Records included a parti-coloured bat, a species typically found on mainland Europe and parts of Asia that is unusual in the UK.

Trees were assessed by a trained team of ecologists, recording various parameters include tree species, age and condition. The main purpose was to identify bat roost potential; this was categorised in accordance with Collins (2023).

A total of 61 trees in the Onshore Development Area were assessed. The majority (75%) of trees were oak, sycamore and ash. 78% of trees were considered to have higher bat roost potential.

It is recommended that the GLTA is repeated prior to the proposed works. Any trees with higher bat roost potential will require further survey work should they be impacted by the works.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of Report

This report has been prepared by Peak Ecology Ltd with Royal HaskoningDHV on behalf of RWE Renewables UK. It provides the results of an assessment of trees to determine their potential to support roosting bats, known as a Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) within the Onshore Development Area associated with the Dogger Bank South (DBS) Offshore Wind Farms.

The purpose of this report is to:

- Detail the methods employed to assess trees for their bat roost potential;
- Include the survey details, surveyors and any constraints to the surveys;
- Identify potential bat roosts that may be lost or affected by the proposed works;
- Identify key issues within the Onshore Development Area; and
- Identify any need for additional survey work.

As a data report this will not include an evaluation of impacts or details of mitigation; this will be addressed in the EIA.

The approach to this survey follows best practice published by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2013) and the British Standards Institution (BSI, 2013). In general, standard accepted survey methods have been followed, details of methods are included in section 3.2 below.

1.2 Proposed Works

RWE Renewables is preparing an application for the development of DBS East and DBS West wind farms. The Projects will require a buried onshore export cable between the landfall location close to Skipsea and the onshore grid connection points at Creyke Beck, west of Beverley; this area with associated infrastructure is referred to as the Onshore Development Area.

1.3 Survey Area

The Onshore Study Area reflects the landfall and route options at that time, over time these options have been refined to the point that this area now equates to the Onshore Development Area. All trees which were likely to be affected by the projects were surveyed, this included trees which may not be relevant due to study area refinement.

All trees within the Onshore Development Area have been assessed. The Onshore Development Area has been included in **Figure 1** below.

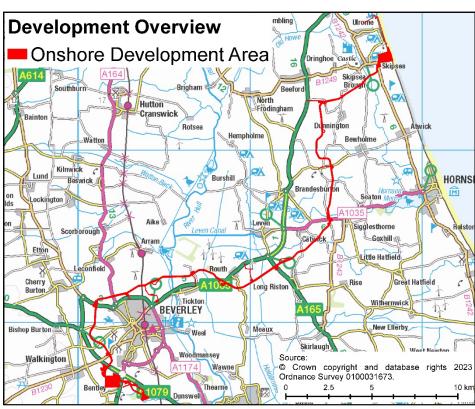


Figure 1 – The Onshore Development Area

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1.4 Legislation

Bats and their roosts are fully protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) through inclusion in Section 1 (Schedule 5). Bats are also a UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework species. As such it is an offence to:

- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture (or take) bats:
- Deliberately disturb bats (whether in a roost or not);
- Recklessly disturb roosting bats or obstruct access to their roosts; or
- Damage or destroy bat roosts.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Desk Study

A desk study was undertaken using records provided by the North and East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre (NEYEDC). Data within a 1km buffer of the Onshore Study Area has been mapped in Appendix A. The Onshore Study Area reflects the landfall and route options at that time, over time these options have been refined to the point that this area now equates to the Onshore Development Area. Additionally, MAGIC was used to obtain any bat European Protected Species (EPS) licence returns from Natural England that were within the Onshore Development Area. The desk study has been reported in a standalone document (Peak Ecology, 2022) but relevant information is included in this report.

2.2 Tree Assessment

A ground level tree assessment was carried out on all trees which were likely to be affected by the Projects were surveyed, this included trees which may no longer be relevant due to study area refinement. The purpose of the survey was to identify any suitability to support roosting bats. Survey methodology was in line with the most up-to-date guidance available at the time of the survey (Collins (ed), 2016); however, methods are considered compliant with the recently published update to the good practice guidelines published by the Bat Conservation Trust (Collins (ed), 2023). All trees were assessed, however, trees with a DBH (diameter at breast height) value of less than 20cms were not recorded. Various data were recorded, including;

- Ten figure grid reference;
- Species;
- Height (estimate);
- Age (category);
- · Condition; and
- Bat Roost Potential.

Comments were also included to add clarification to the assessment.

The suitability of a tree for roosting bats relies on the presence of potential roost features (PRFs); these may include:

- Fissures and cracks, often caused by tree damage;
- Rot holes/cavities;
- Woodpecker holes, knot holes; and
- · Lifted bark.

Where PRFs were visible from the ground, their locations and characteristics were recorded to determine the requirement for further surveys. For trees that possess multiple PRFs, or where PRFs are considered likely to support roosts of a higher conservation significance

(PRF-M), up to three additional surveys may be required to confirm presence/ likely absence of a roost (Collins (ed), 2023). This further survey effort typically comprises aerial assessments, or activity surveys with night vision aids where climbing is considered an impractical, unsafe, or inefficient method of gathering additional data. Individual trees with singular features suitable for one or small numbers of bats (PRF-I) do not typically require further surveys, with precautionary methods recommended for any works or removal.

Woodlands were also assessed, in the case of smaller more open woodlands, all trees were assessed. Larger and denser stands of trees were assessed as a block, the peripheral trees were assessed individually as well as any trees along woodland rides or other more open areas within the woodland; the block of trees was then given a suitability category. The surveyors also assessed the suitability of the habitat for foraging and commuting bats.

Once cable micro-siting is complete and any trees which could be impacted is known, further survey work will be necessary, in order to ensure legal compliance.

Lead surveyors were all experienced in assessing trees from ground level. Trees were not climbed; where necessary, binoculars were used to identify and classify potential roost features (PRFs). The survey team comprised nine ecologists as listed in **Table 1** below.

Table 1 – The	Survey Team
---------------	-------------

	Survey Team Members	
Paul Fisher	Charlotte Haylock	Darran Sharp
Joe Freer	Frank Marshall	Emily Stephenson
Niamh Gibson	Eve Scott	Amy Wardle

2.2.1 Survey Dates

The surveys were undertaken in February and March 2023 with the exception of a few cases where land access could not be obtained; these areas were accessed between April and September 2023, inclusive. The final refinements to the Onshore Study Area resulted in a reduced survey area and in some cases, the Onshore Study Area has been extended to accommodate access routes, corridor revisions and laydown areas; trees in these areas were assessed upon receipt of access permissions.

2.3 Limitations

2.3.1 **Survey Methods**

All trees were assessed from all sides, with the exception of trees in dense woodland; any features were noted and used to formulate the overall suitability of each tree. It is possible that some features could not be seen from ground level and not taken into consideration.

Trees that were surveyed during the growing season may have been in part or in full leaf and this can obscure features and make it more difficult to see potential roost sites.

Some woodlands were very dense and could not be fully accessed; in these cases, peripheral trees were assessed and other open areas such as woodland rides, where surveyors could access. Consequently, it is possible that some trees with bat roost potential in dense woodland were not assessed.

2.3.2 **Access**

There were no access constraints.

2.3.3 Lifespan of Data

It is likely that more features suitable for roosting bats will form over time as a result of tree aging and storm damage, and some features may disappear over time as a result of tree wounds healing. Most ecological survey data is considered to be valid for up to two years; however, additional survey effort within this time may provide more accurate data.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Desk Study

Species data obtained from the North & East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre (NEYEDC) contained records of bats and roosts within a 1km buffer of the Onshore Study Area from 2002 onwards. This is mapped in Appendix A and presented in **Table 2** below. In some cases, data is provided at 1km square resolution without revealing the exact location of the record. For mapping purposes, 1km grid squares which have been intersected by the 1km buffer have been included in the table.

There were no records of bat roosts within the Onshore Development Area. Four records of bat roosts were obtained from the desktop study outside of the Onshore Development Area but within a 1km buffer, as shown on figures in Appendix A. The confirmed record of a particular interest, as it is a species typically found on mainland Europe and parts of Asia that is unusual in the UK.

Table 2- Desk Study Data (displayed in Appendix A)

Common Name	Scientific	Grid Ref	Year	Comment
Common Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pipistrellus	TA016378	2008	
Common Pipistrelle	P. pipistrellus	TA017378	2010	
Common Pipistrelle	P. pipistrellus	TA02663822	2015	Roost - 1 Count
Common Pipistrelle	P. pipistrellus	TA028379	2003	
Common Pipistrelle	P. pipistrellus	TA035405	2009	
Common Pipistrelle	P. pipistrellus	TA038408	2010	
Common Pipistrelle	P. pipistrellus	TA041403	2010	
Common Pipistrelle	P. pipistrellus	TA054417	2011	
Common Pipistrelle	P. pipistrellus	TA055415	2004	
Common Pipistrelle	P. pipistrellus	TA062419	2009	
Common Pipistrelle	P. pipistrellus	TA083424	2002	
Common Pipistrelle	P. pipistrellus	TA1381446064	2016	Roost - 5 Count
Common Pipistrelle	P. pipistrellus	TA162567	2010	
Common Pipistrelle	P. pipistrellus	TA174570	2010	Roost - 10 Count
Nathusius' Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus nathusii	TA133454	2010	
Parti-coloured Bat	Vespertilio murinus	TA032407	2010	Roost - 1 Count
Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus sp.	TA155458	2005	
Whiskered Bat	Myotis mystacinus	TA059436	2002	

The data presented here gives a degree of context and is discussed more fully in the Bat Transect Report (Peak Ecology, 2023).

3.2 Survey

In total, 61 trees were assessed. Tree assessment data is mapped and included in Appendix B; the raw data is included in Appendix C and a summary is included in **Table 3** below. An oak tree (Grid Reference TA 01616 36574) with no bat roost potential was noted because it contained a barn owl nest box, believed to be unused at the time of survey.

<u>Table 3 – Tree Assessment Data Summary</u>

Common Scientific		Number Surveyed	Suitability of Trees or Groups		
Name	Name		PRF-I	PRF-M	
Oak	Quercus sp.	19	6	13	
Ash	Fraxinus excelsior	12	2	10	
Sycamore	Acer pseudoplatanus	16	3	13	
Silver Birch	Betula pendula	4*	0	4	
Beech	Fagus sylvatica	2	0	2	
Field Maple	Acer campestre	3	0	3	
Apple	<i>Malus</i> sp.	2	0	2	
Elm	Ulmus procera	1	0	1	
Holly	llex aquifolium	1	1	0	
Poplar	Populus sp.	1	1	0	
		TOTALS	13	48	

^{*}Includes two groups of trees

The majority of trees assessed were considered mature (53), whilst four trees were overmature and two were semi-mature. Of the trees assessed, 33 appeared alive and healthy, 25 included dead limbs and four were completely dead.

Of all trees surveyed, the majority (75%) were either oak, sycamore or ash. 78% of trees were of a higher bat roost potential; these trees would require further survey work, based on the information provided in section 3.2, in the event that they could be impacted by the proposed works.

4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Surveys were completed in 2023, following the guidelines as set out in Collins (2023).

In total 61 trees were surveyed; 48 trees were considered to be suitable for multiple bats, or suitable to support roosts of higher conservation significance. It is recommended that the GLTA is repeated on all trees, prior to the proposed works; this data is considered valid for up to two years; however, the bat roost potential of trees is likely to change within this time.

If the proposed works were to impact on trees assigned a suitability of PRF-M, then bat activity survey work will be required. This would initially comprise aerial assessments within the bat activity season (May to September, inclusive) by licenced tree climbers. Bat activity surveys may then be required should aerial assessments be considered insufficient or inappropriate. The advantage of the aerial inspection is that it might rule out the need for any other survey work.

5 REFERENCES

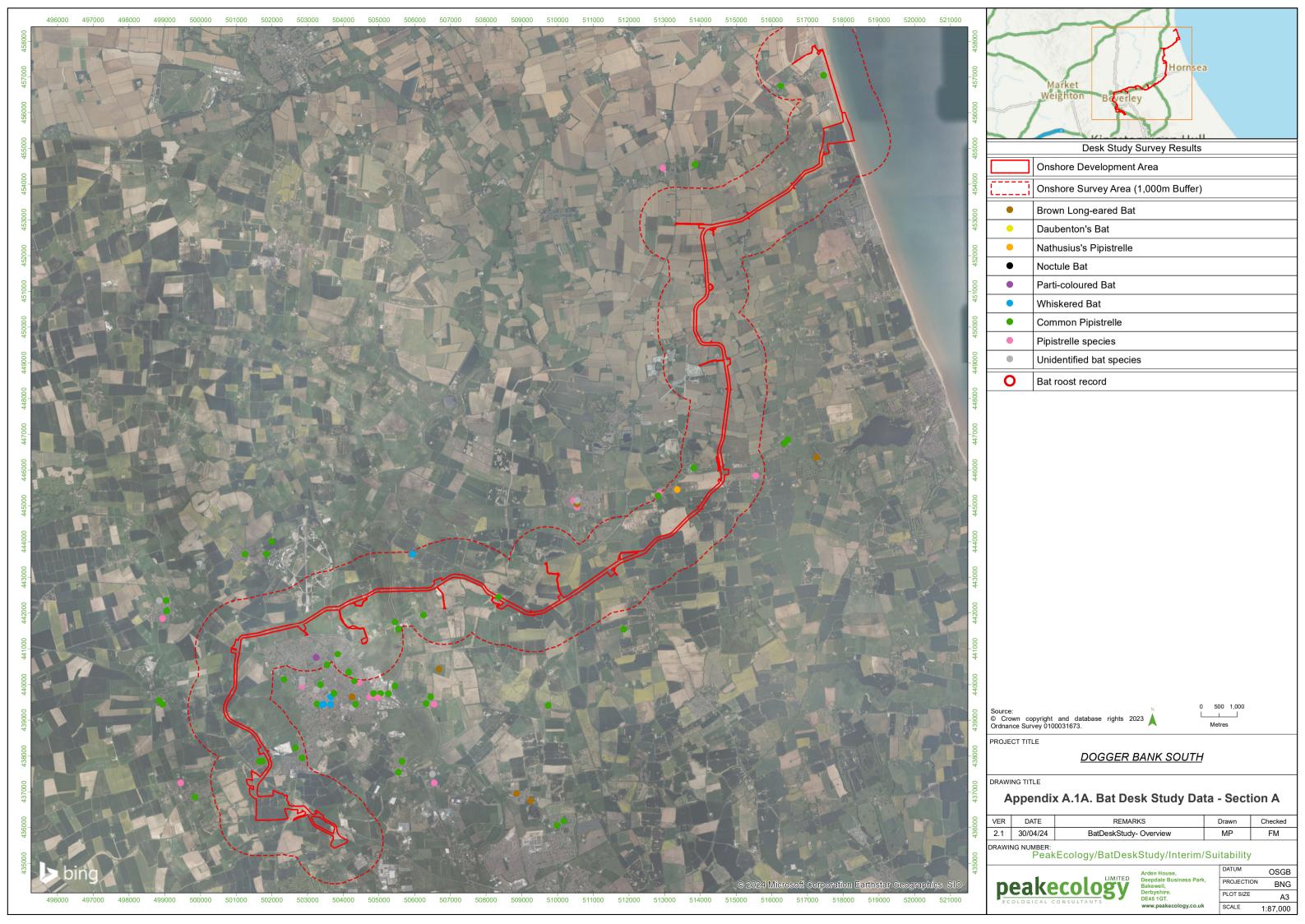
Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2013) *Competencies for Species Surveys in Britain and Ireland; Overview.* CIEEM, Winchester. Online https://cieem.net/resource/competencies-for-species-survey-css/

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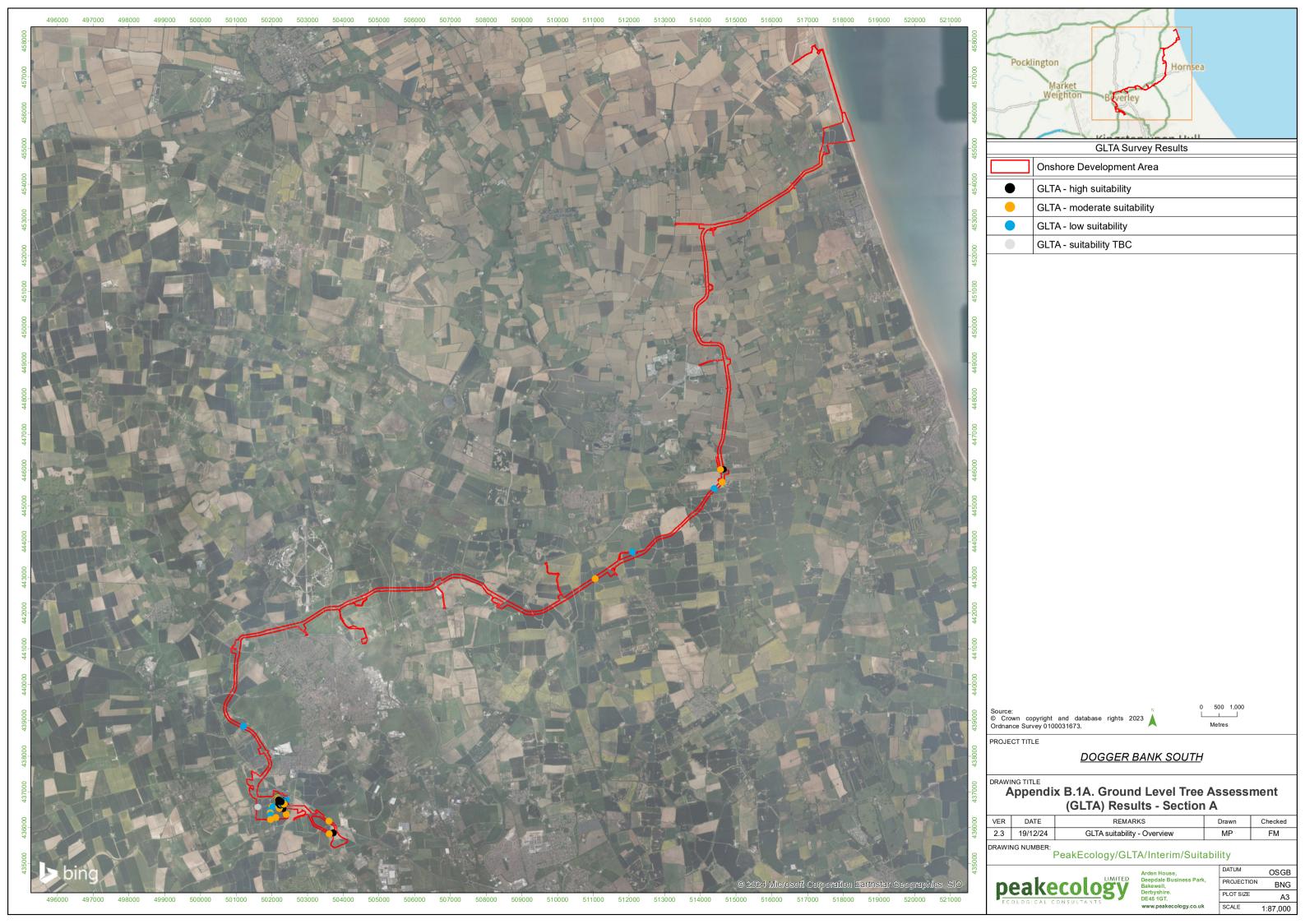
Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside Website. http://www.magic.gov.uk/

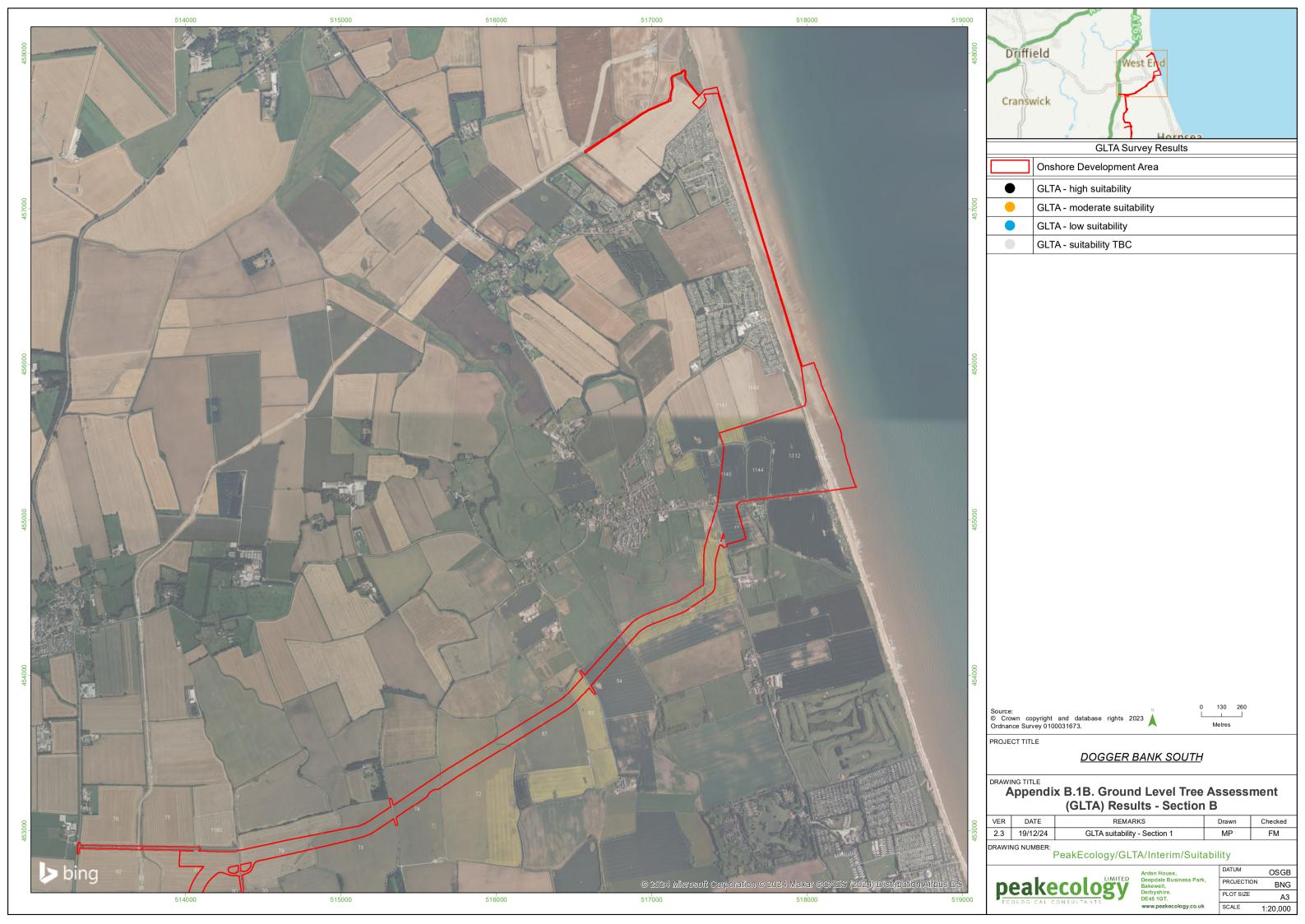
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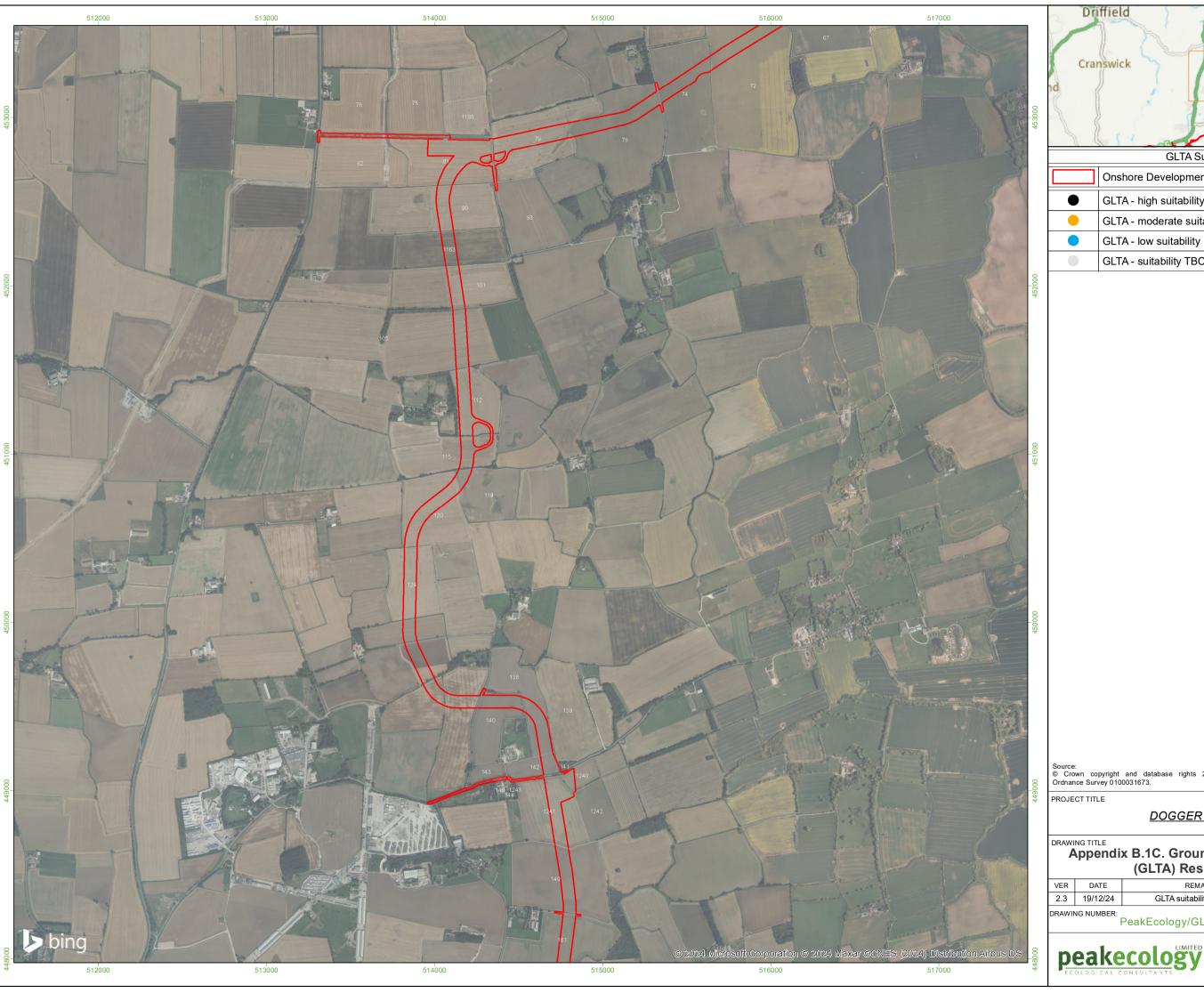
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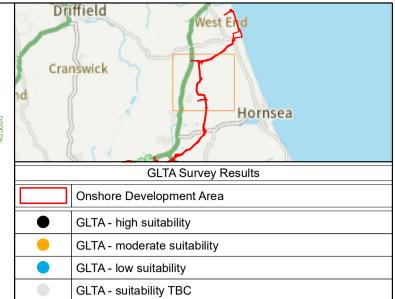


APPENDIX B: GLTA Survey Map









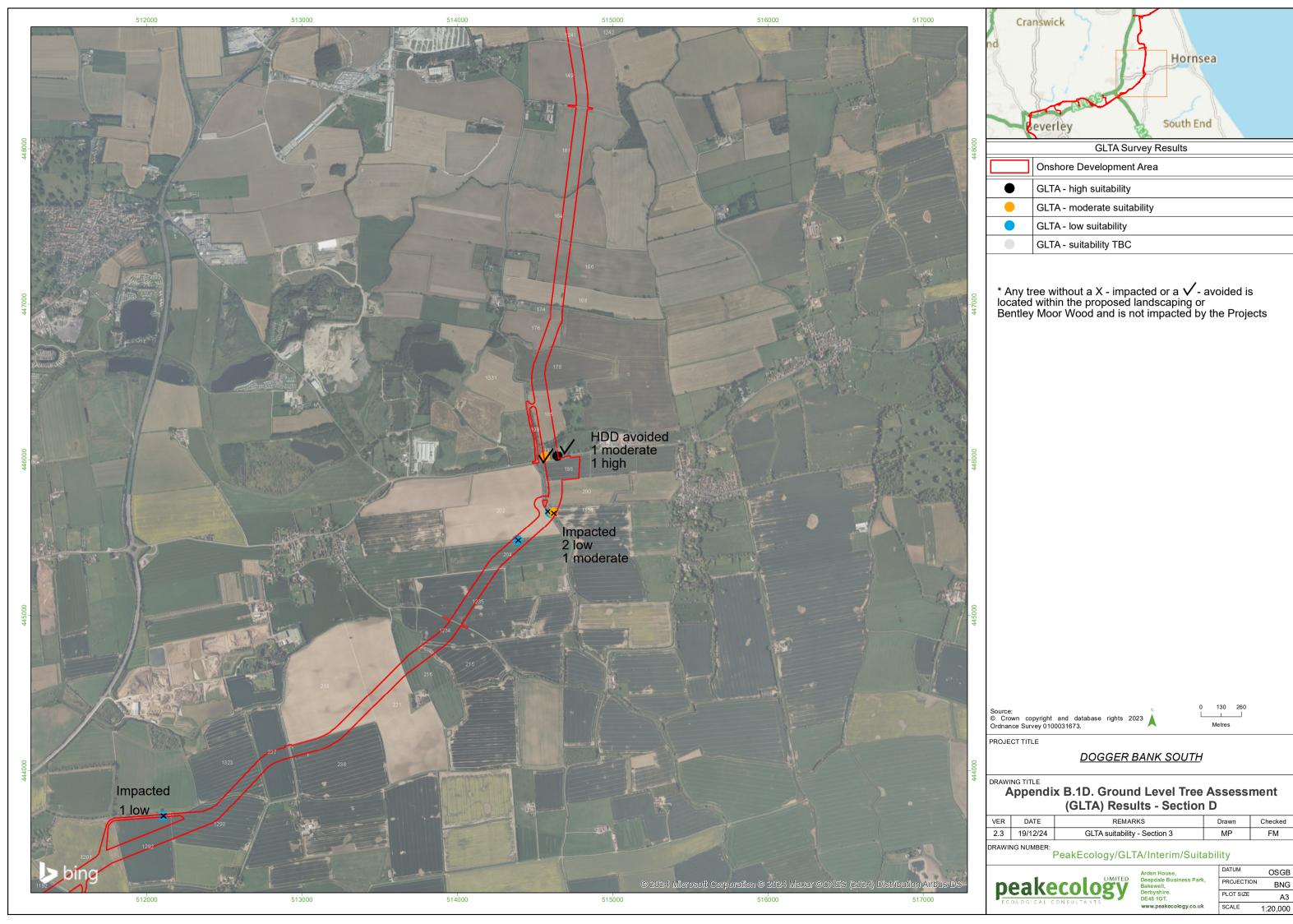
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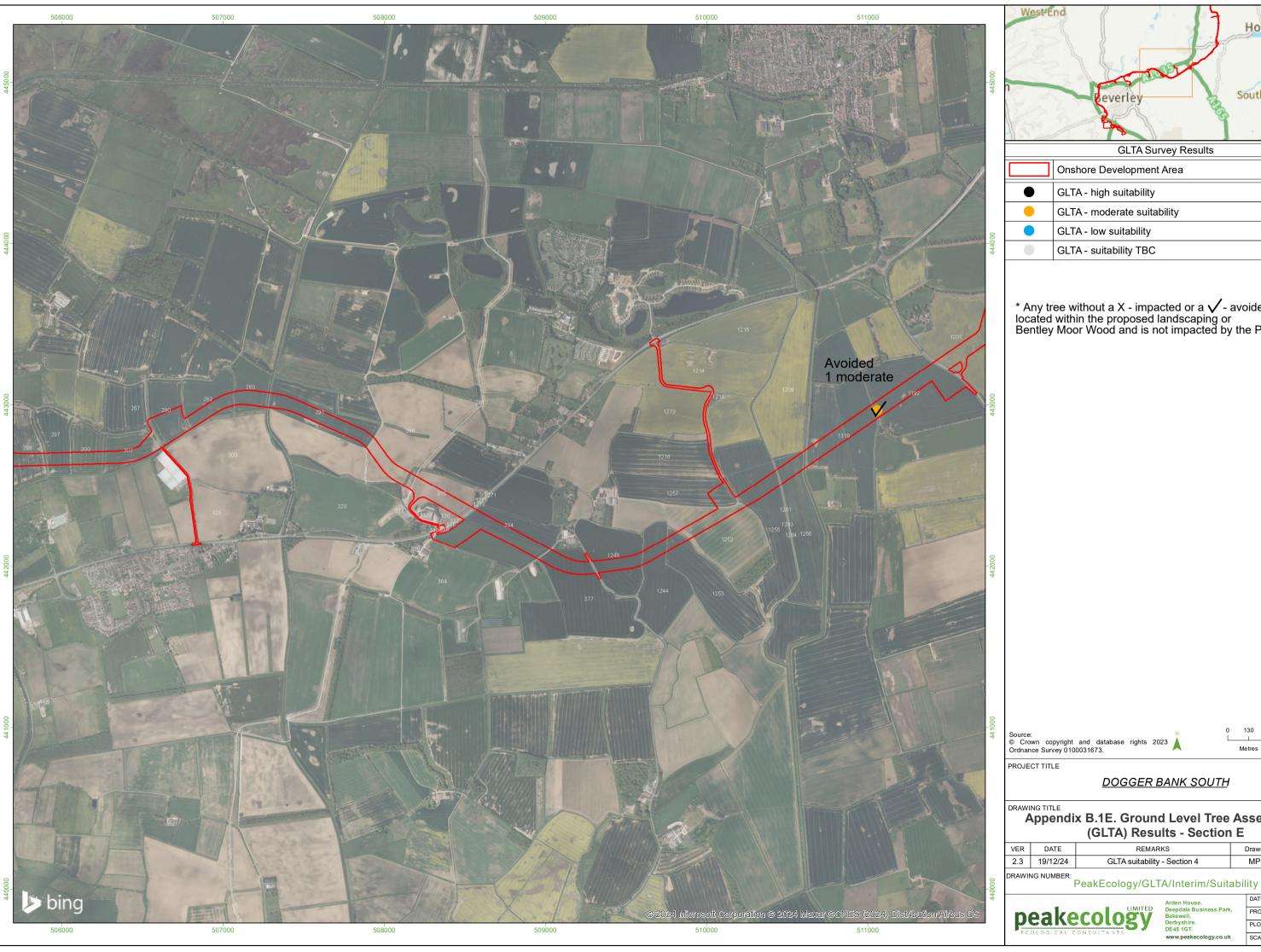
DOGGER BANK SOUTH

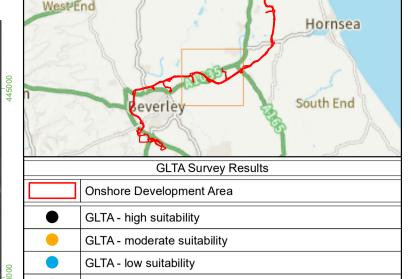
Appendix B.1C. Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) Results - Section C

VER	DATE	REMARKS	Drawn	Checked			
2.3	19/12/24	GLTA suitability - Section 2	MP	FM			

RAWING NUMBER:
PeakEcology/GLTA/Interim/Suitability







* Any tree without a X - impacted or a $\sqrt{\ }$ - avoided is located within the proposed landscaping or Bentley Moor Wood and is not impacted by the Projects

Source: © Crown copyright and database rights 2023 \bigvee Ordnance Survey 0100031673.

DOGGER BANK SOUTH

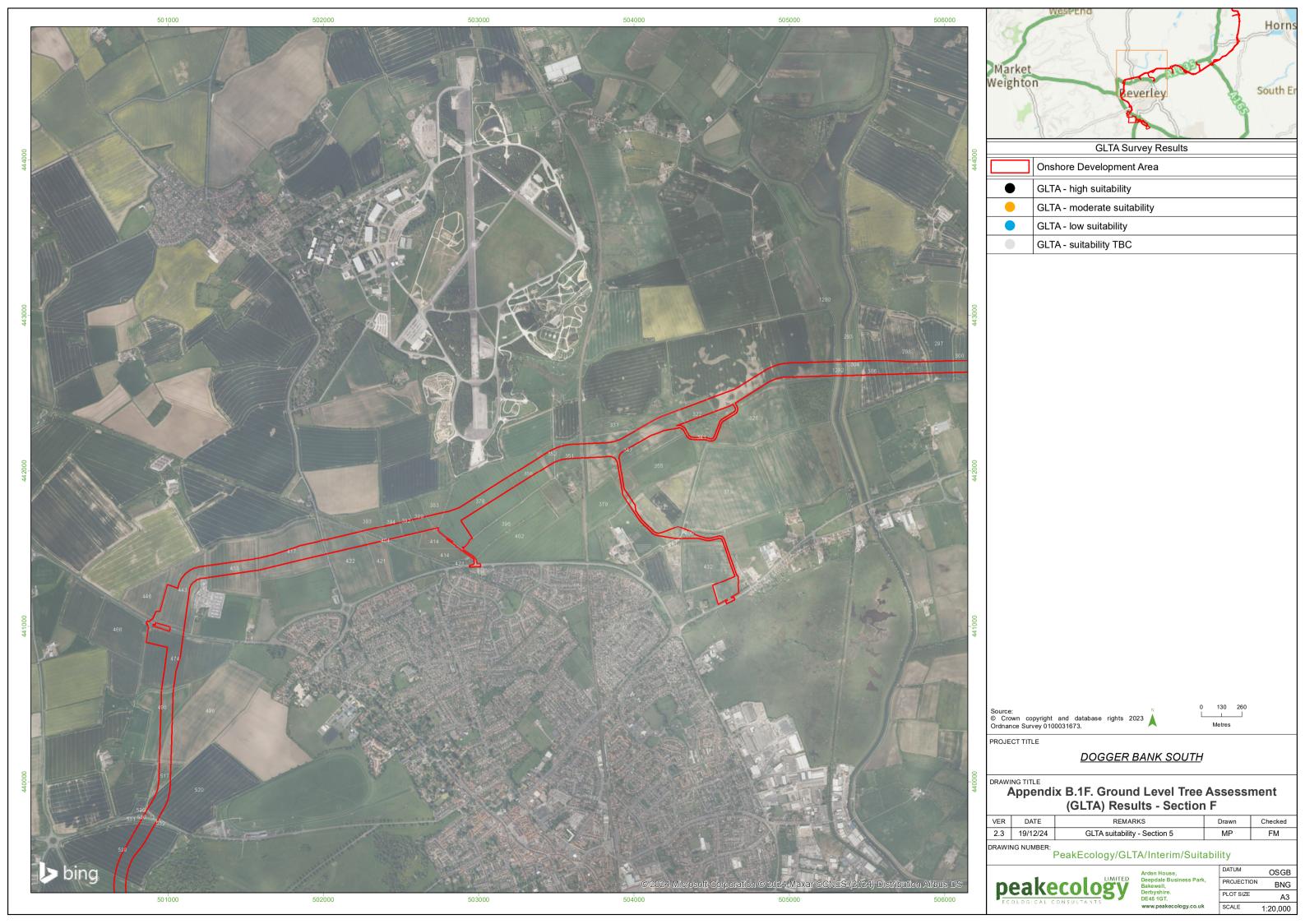
Appendix B.1E. Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) Results - Section E

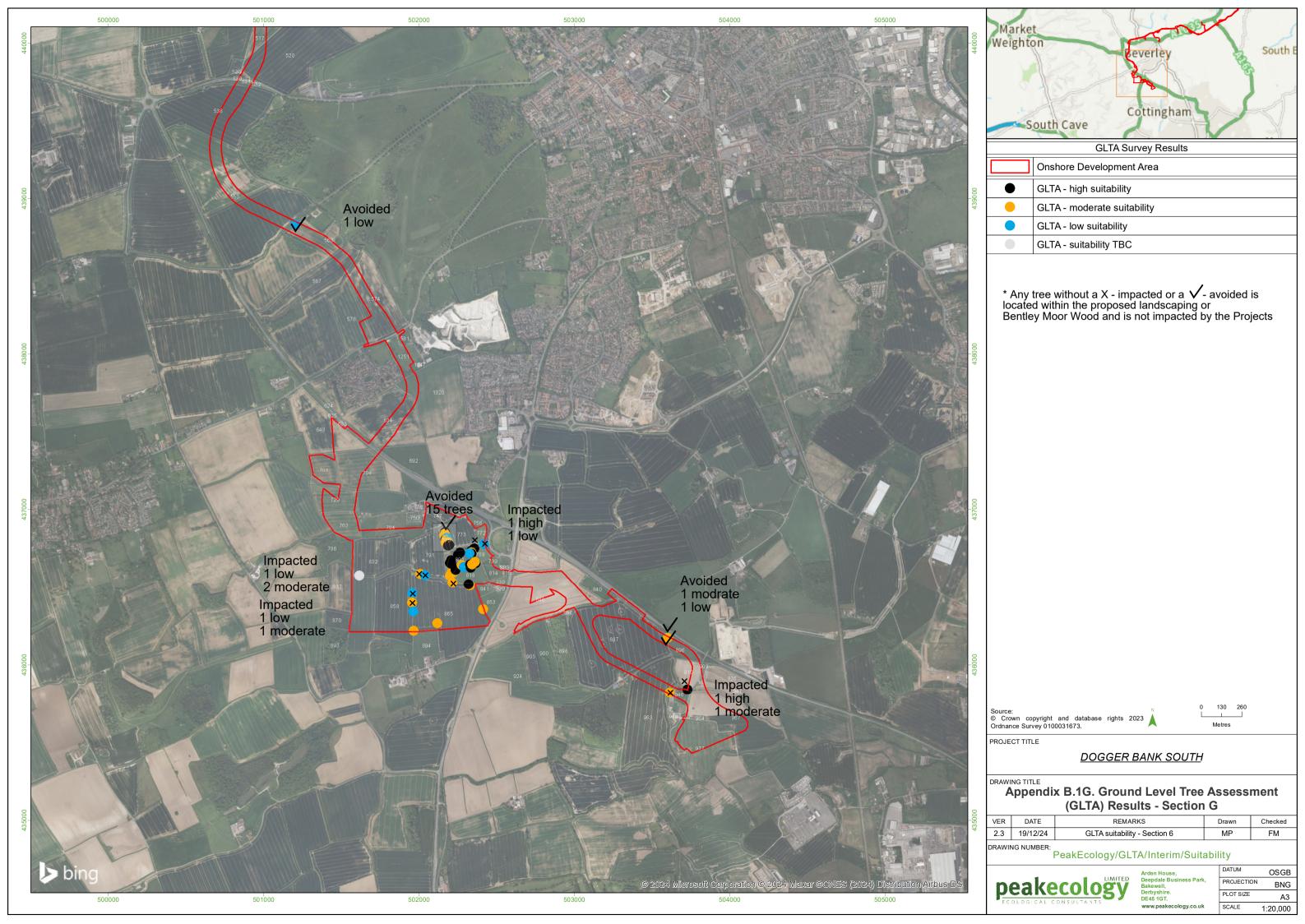
VER	DATE	REMARKS	Drawn	Checked
2.3	19/12/24	GLTA suitability - Section 4	MP	FM



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APPENDIX C: GLTA Survey Data

APPENDIX C – GLTA Survey Data

Field No	Grid Ref	Species	Height (m)	Age	Condition	Comments	Roost Potential
789	TA 02187 36765	Apple	9	Over-mature	Mixed	Cankers on stem leading to large trunk cavity, NE aspect, 2m.	High
801	TA 02338 36722	Apple	5	Over-mature	Mixed	Knot-holes on N and S aspects, 2m, hazard beam and snapped stem.	Moderate
915	TA 03729 35843	Ash	13	Mature	Alive	Large tear-out with callus rolls S; knot-hole W; tear-outs top of main stem NW.	High
775	TA 02167 36850	Ash	13	Mature	Alive	Wound/ branch cavity, 2m, N aspect, and knot-hole/ stub end 4m E aspect	High
775	TA 02196 36769	Ash	7	Over-mature	Mixed	Large open trunk cavity extending upwards into leading limbs, various cankers around burrs.	High
789	TA 02365 36654	Ash	12	Mature	Alive	Butt rot x2 on different stems <2m	High
801	TA 02336 36731	Ash	11	Mature	Mixed	Tear-out/ trunk cavity E aspect <2m. Large traverse snapped co-dominant stem, E and W aspects, 2m.	High
202	TA 14599 45660	Ash	8	Semi-mature	Alive	Canker, E, 1m.	Low
204	TA 14387 45483	Ash	9	Mature	Mixed	Knot -hole N, 5m	Low
896	TA 03602 36174	Ash	11	Mature	Mixed	Hollow stem, cankers, knot-hole SW. Snapped branches in canopy.	Moderate
775	TA 02167 36843	Ash	12	Mature	Alive	Callused knot-holes / stud ends W Aspect, 2.5m and 5m	Moderate
865	TA 02008 36585	Ash	10	Mature	Alive	Tear-out and callus >2m, S aspect, butt rott.	Moderate
1334	TA 14615 45661	Ash	12	Mature	Mixed	Knot-hole, branch end, N, 2m. Tear-out, W, 5m.	Moderate
801	TA 02360 36661	Ash	10	Mature	Alive	Butt rot from ground to 2m on 2 adjacent trunks	Moderate
193	TA 14645 46025	Beech	17	Mature	Alive	Canker/hole, S, 10m.	High
194	TA 14567 46020	Beech	18	Mature	Alive	Included stems, S, 5m. Branch callus/Tear-out, N, 7m.	Moderate
775	TA 02193 36777	Elm	15	Mature	Dead	Lifted bark at various heights on stem. NE aspect.	Moderate
801	TA 02337 36726	Field Maple	6	Mature	Mixed	Tear-out/ canker NE aspect, 2m	High
865	TA 01965 36219	Field Maple	8	Mature	Mixed	Cankers and fluting leading to basal cavity, W aspect, <1m.	Moderate
801	TA 02221 36594	Field Maple	14	Mature	Alive	Fused trunks cracks	Moderate
775	TA 02180 36815	Holly	8	Mature	Alive	Cavities between welded branches, 1 - 2m	Low
773	TA 02356 36748	Oak	12	Mature	Mixed	Woodpecker hole, W aspect, 4.5m. Other multiple Tear-outs and knot-hole in canopy.	High
801	TA 02337 36714	Oak	15	Mature	Mixed	Butt rot cavity extends upwards into stem, NE aspect, 1.5m.	High
865	TA 02320 36518	Oak	13	Mature	Mixed	Large subsidance split/callus/butt rot, ground -3m, S aspect.	High
801	TA 02236 36611	Oak	15	Mature	Alive	Tearout at 1.5m	High
801	TA 02253 36709	Oak	16	Mature	Alive	Woodpecker holes at 12m on both opposite sides of the tree	High
896	TA 03599 36178	Oak	15	Mature	Alive	Callused weld, NE aspect.	Low
789	TA 02418 36775	Oak	14	Mature	Alive	Traverse snaps and broken limb S aspect	Low
865	TA 02039 36576	Oak	10	Mature	Alive	Knot-hole, S aspect, looks superficial. Deadlimbs, dessicated fissures.	Low
865	TA 01958 36460	Oak	7	Mature	Mixed	Deadlimb with dissicated fissures, W aspect 4m.	Low
865	TA 01963 36343	Oak	7	Mature	Mixed	Flaking bark E aspect, desiccated fissures in dead limb N aspect.	Low
1290	TA 12104 43705	Oak	10	Mature	Mixed	1 potential Knot-hole 4m up	Low
801	TA 02289 36629	Oak	14	Mature	Alive	Hazard beam -lateral branch at 2.5m	Low
946	TA 03614 35822	Oak	11	Mature	Alive	Split branch, 9m, SW, feature facing N,	Moderate
865	TA 01956 36400	Oak	8	Mature	Mixed	Dense ivy concealing feature ie. Tear-out E aspect, 2m. Butt rott, E aspect. Deadwood in canopy.	Moderate
						Impact shatter, NE limb, SW aspect, 4m. Superficial callus around dead stubs S aspect. Other	
865	TA 02119 36268	Oak	12	Mature	Mixed	deadwood/snapped branches in canopy.	Moderate
						Callus around deadwood of snapped limb, NW aspect, 4m. Flaking bark on dead branch N side of tree.	
865	TA 02413 36357	Oak	14	Mature	Mixed	Dessicated fissure and poss woodpecker hole in large snapped limb, 8m, SE side of tree NW aspect.	Moderate
865	TA 02328 36510	Oak	13	Mature	Mixed	Callus around branch collar of dead limb, W aspect, 7m, others in canopy. Delaminated bark N aspect, 0-2m.	Moderate
865	TA 02215 36528	Oak	13	Mature	Mixed	Dead seam, callus rolls, 5-8m	Moderate
1192	TA 11061 42965	Oak	9	Mature	Mixed	Trunk cavity, E. Tear-out on main leader, 5m	Moderate
831	TA 01616 36574	Oak			Alive	Owl box	Not stated
801	TA 02326 36717	Poplar	14	Semi-mature	Alive	Knot-hole or canker visible 10m, E facing.	Low
801	TA 02200 36656	Silver Birch	13	Mature	Alive	woodpecker holes at 3m and 4m.	High
801	TA 02207 36650	Silver Birch	4	Mature	Dead	4x woodpecker holes at 3.5-4m	High

Field No	Grid Ref	Species	Height (m)	Age	Condition	Comments	Roost Potential
801	TA 02207 36672	Silver Birch grp	0	Mixed	Mixed		High
801	TA 02330 36646	Silver Birch grp	0	Mature	Mixed	Various woodpecker and rot holes also cracks	High
775	TA 02172 36806	Sycamore	12	Mature	Alive	Large trunk cavity / wound from fallen double leader, W aspect, 2m	High
801	TA 02333 36626	Sycamore	12	Mature	Alive	Woodpecker hole at 5m facing cracked/split underside above woodpecker hole	High
801	TA 02265 36721	Sycamore	14	Mature	Alive	Woodpecker hole at 4m	High
775	TA 02190 36795	Sycamore	6	Over-mature	Dead	Knot-hole, south facing branch, E aspect, other small crevices on stem.	Low
560	TA 01206 38835	Sycamore	15	Mature	Alive	Fissures on ends of dead branches, dense ivy.	Low
1290	TA 12104 43705	Sycamore	10	Mature	Alive	small Knot-hole and bark crevicees	Low
775	TA 02162 36831	Sycamore	14	Mature	Alive	Knot-hole on W stem, W aspect, 2m	Moderate
775	TA 02168 36818	Sycamore	13	Mature	Alive	Knot-hole/ branch stub , E aspect, 1.2m	Moderate
775	TA 02175 36803	Sycamore	12	Mature	Alive	Butt rot , W aspect, <1m (pos.hibernation potential)	Moderate
775	TA 02171 36785	Sycamore	9	Mature	Mixed	Knot-hole, 1m, W aspect, other wounds and possible cavities, 7-9m	Moderate
775	TA 02187 36789	Sycamore	12	Mature	Alive	Knot-hole SE facing, 5m, other cankers and wounds on tree.	Moderate
801	TA 02215 36607	Sycamore	14	Mature	Alive	Butt rot from ground level	Moderate
801	TA 02274 36641	Sycamore	12	Mature	Alive	Butt rot from ground to at least 70cm + in trunk	Moderate
801	TA 02341 36645	Sycamore	12	Mature	Alive	Tearout at 5m on woodland side	Moderate
775	TA 02187 36765	Sycamore x2	10	Mature	Mixed	Butt rott and included stems, W aspect, canker E aspect 3m.	Moderate
801	TA 02200 36574	Unknown	10		Dead	Rot holes - 2m. Woodpecker holes 3-4m.	Moderate